

IOWA BIRD LIFE

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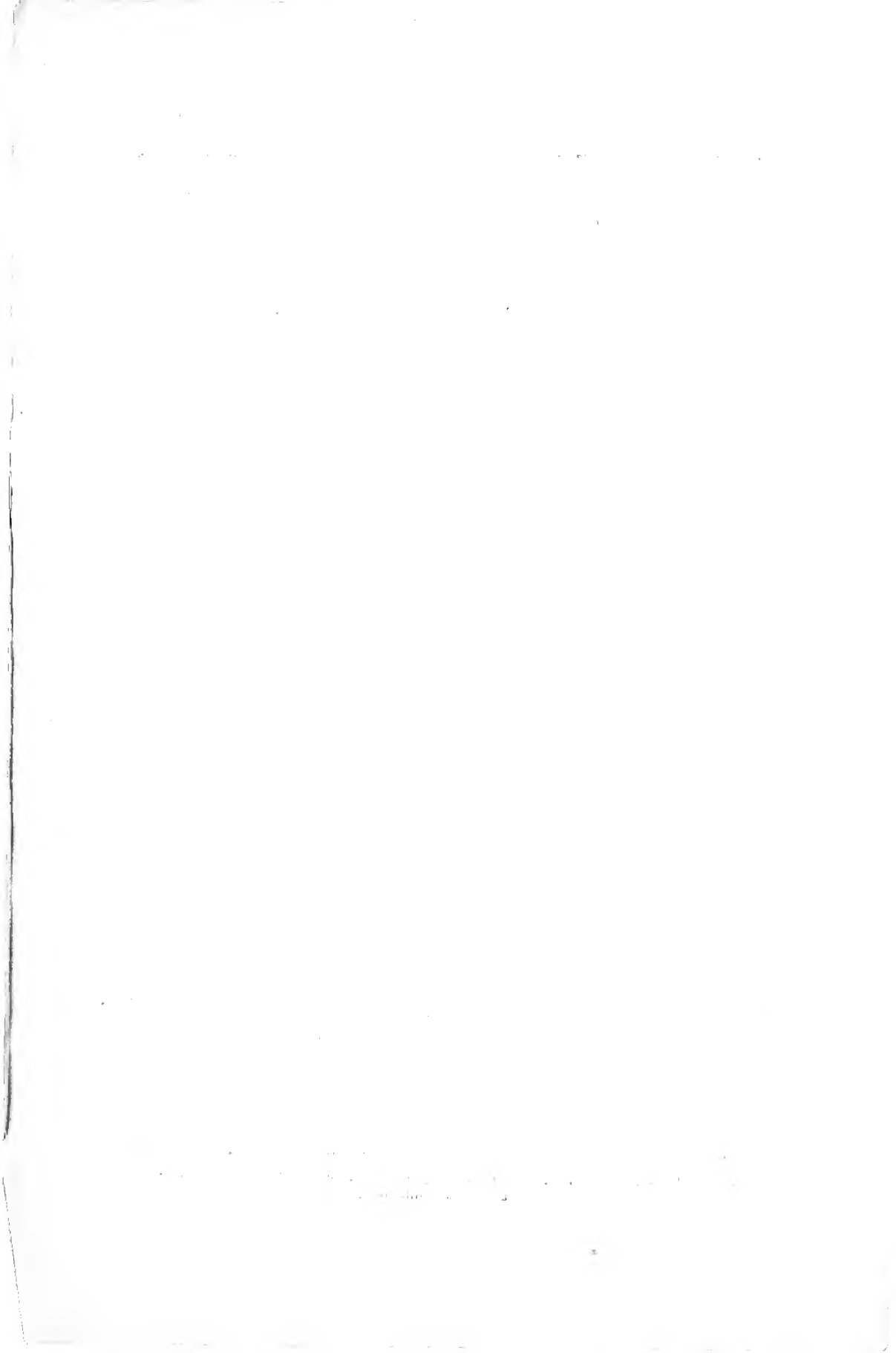


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IOWA BIRD LIFE



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NO. 1

WINTER BIRDS IN THE SIOUX CITY AREA

By WILLIAM YOUNGWORTH

3119 East Second Street
SIOUX CITY, IOWA

The Sioux City area has been blessed with a very open winter and the lack of snow was such a contrast to the several feet of snow on the ground all through the winter of 1959-1960, that the writer could not resist the temptation to take one more thorough winter bird survey, the results of which are given below. The weather has been mild, the roads are much as in summer, and general conditions caused the bird population to spread as the reader will note in the following species reports.

The writer must add here that the desire for numerous day long field trips was sharpened early in the season. On October 3 in Plymouth County I found a flock of more than seventy five Pine Siskins feeding in a big roadside wild sunflower patch and had a feeling that this was to be that year for fine records and have not been disappointed. The writer, often accompanied by Mrs. Youngworth, drove 1,412 miles by car in several directions from Sioux City and as far away as one hundred miles. Our destinations, as all dedicated birders know, were the small town and country cemeteries. We covered all these cemeteries at least once and if we felt we had missed something we often went over them again and several times were rewarded by seeing birds we had missed the first time. This report could become very lengthy if we reported all the species we saw, especially the fine large numbers of individuals and species of hawks encountered on the drives. Therefore we will confine ourselves to just a few species of winter birds.

Golden-crowned Kinglet

After a lapse of three or four years the forepart of this winter was a fine one for this tiny kinglet. The first record was four seen on November 6. On December 3, four were counted feeding with Red Crossbills in the Plymouth Cemetery, near Ireton, Iowa. It seemed that on December 10, everywhere we found crossbills we found kinglets, with three in the Cherokee, Iowa, cemetery, three in the Pierson, Iowa, cemetery and four in the Remsen, Iowa, cemetery. December 30 was another Golden-crowned Kinglet day with four in the Paullina, Iowa, cemetery and two in the Aurelia, Iowa, cemetery.

Bohemian Waxwing

This winter the Bohemian Waxwing was a rather rare resident and not present in hundreds as it was in December 1958. The first ones were seen on November 26, in the Anthon, Iowa, cemetery. I counted about ten which were scrambling around in a red cedar with several dozen Cedar Waxwings. The same day about twenty miles farther south in the Grant Township cemetery I was able to pick out three more Bohemian Waxwings from a flock of feeding Cedar Waxwings. On December 26, in the above spot, Mrs. Youngworth and I found five Bohemian Waxwings feeding with a large flock of Cedar Waxwings, which was our final mid-winter record.

Cedar Waxwing

This more common waxwing was first noticed on November 22, in the two above mentioned locations and later in the day a flock of ten was found feeding in Belvidere cemetery south of Castana, Iowa. On December 26, after watching a flock of waxwings feeding on cedar berries at Ticonic we drove on to the Castana cemetery and found at least fifty Cedar Waxwings in a ravine across from the cemetery. It was getting late in the day and snow started to fall, so we talked each other out of going into that cedar woods and flushing the birds. Ten miles farther the sun came out and I regretted my actions, because I still feel that area must have hidden hundreds of waxwings.

Northern Shrike

The Northern Shrike is such an uncommon bird with us during most winters, that I think all records of it should be published. My one lone record for this winter is on December 26, near Luton, Woodbury County, Iowa.

Evening Grosbeak

On November 22, 1960, while covering the Anthon, Iowa, cemetery we noticed a regular flurry of birds in a red cedar and moved in for a closer view. Among the numerous waxwings were two strangers, which soon proved to be Evening Grosbeaks. The grosbeaks were tame and allowed me to approach within a few feet. I circled the tree several times in hopes of finding more grosbeaks but had to be content with seeing just the two.

Purple Finch

While during some winters the Purple Finch is found as a regular visitor, this winter it was, as the authorities generally state, a rare winter visitor. I have only two observations and they both were early and made at the writer's home. On November 24, a lone Purple Finch fed in the front yard on ash and catalpa seeds. Later this finch moved around to the rear of the house and took a few listless pecks at dried crab apples, then went back to ground feeding. The other record came shortly after, on November 27, when three Purple Finches were in the yard for just a few moments and then flew away.

Common Redpoll

As far as my records go this was not a Redpoll winter. This species was listed only three times and then in small numbers. On November 26, while on a pheasant hunt, my companion Leon Harbeck flushed three Redpolls from a drainage ditch and they flew within a few feet of me. On December 3, I found two Redpolls feeding with the crossbills and kinglets in Plymouth cemetery near Ireton, Iowa. The bird record was again three Redpolls on December 26, in the Grant Township cemetery near Ticonic, Iowa.

Pine Siskin

This winter has been a Pine Siskin winter and the writer has seen them on every field trip and often about my home. We found them feeding in nearly every cemetery with the crossbills and as late as January 22 they were feeding in the arbor vitae trees in the front yard. After that first big initial flock mentioned above we never found them in quite such large flocks, more often ten or fifteen birds, but several times we did aggregate a hundred Pine Siskins in the course of a day.

In this area in winter the Red Crossbills seem to prefer the seed of the various kinds of spruce trees, which certainly carried an abundant crop of cones this year. On November 26, while near Hornick, Iowa, we saw five crossbills feeding on the seed of the Giant Ragweed, more commonly called Horse-weed. In several cemeteries where there was abundant food, we felt that possibly the presence of wintering Great Horned Owls was the reason for the lack of crossbills. At Hawarden, Iowa, the culprit was probably a wintering Goshawk, as the cemetery was void of birds except for this bold hawk, which in this case allowed approach to within a few feet before flushing. Another thing which we felt lowered our crossbill count in the northeast part of the area surveyed, which is very fertile farm land, was the presence of dozens of fine windbreaks, mostly spruce, around many of the fine farms all of which were heavy with cones. Crossbills could have been scattered all through that area in small flocks, but it was impossible for this observer to check the hundreds of windbreaks in that region.

Harris' Sparrow

The dignified Harris' Sparrows have long been one of my favorite migrants and winter visitors. This winter has been no exception with records for sixteen days during November and as many as two dozen birds on November 26, in the Grant Township cemetery, Monona County. On a follow-up to the same spot on December 26, I again put the Harris' Sparrow on the day's list. On January 7, 1961, while on the crossbill survey, we flushed a fine flock of about twenty five Harris' Sparrows from a ravine in the Bluffview cemetery at Vermillion, South Dakota.



HARRIS SPARROW

Drawing by Ernest Steffen. Zinc cut a gift of Wm. Youngworth.

THE 1960 CHRISTMAS BIRD CENSUS IN IOWA

Compiled by

WOODWARD H. BROWN

A census, by definition, is an official enumeration of the population of a district. When this population has the birds' freedom of movement an accurate count for any sizeable area is possible only with careful planning and the expenditure of considerable time and effort on the part of a number of observers. The results obtained at Davenport year after year are proof of this. A count from 5 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. by 40 observers there turned up 74 species, only one less than the number found in 1957. The time spent in taking several of the censuses which were reported fell far short of the minimum time required for acceptance of a report by "**Audubon Field Notes**". Likewise, the territory covered in some others would hardly fit into a 15-mile circle as required.

The tabulation of 22 censuses includes 94 species. A total of 92 was reported for both 1958 and 1959. One hundred sixty-three observers are listed, but only 138 persons were afield, some taking part in two or even three and four censuses. A radical departure from conventional methods was the use of an airplane by the Clinton group. This was a great help in spotting ducks and eagles.

Turkey Vulture was observed for the first time, but there was no invasion of the northern species other than Short-eared Owls. The numbers of Winter Wrens, Red-breasted Nuthatches and Purple Finches were the lowest of the past three years. No Common Redpolls were found, and Pine Siskins were reported by only four, and Red Crossbills by three stations. Cedar Waxwings, usually not uncommon, were seen in only three places. On the other hand, there were several species reported which usually have migrated by census time.

A total of 1,419 Ring-necked Pheasants was reported from Union Slough—an amazing number for an area of less than 2,200 acres, of which 50% is marsh and water. The corresponding figure for two years ago was 936. A concentration of 2,200 Brown-headed Cowbirds in the Sioux City area was also unusual. The total of 101 Rough-legged Hawks reported from 15 stations is almost equal to the combined number seen in the three years immediately preceding.

1. ALEDO, ILL. (Same area as last year). Jan. 2; 6:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Temp. 30 F. Wind, 5 to 8 m.p.h. N.W. Cloudy, snow on ground. Observers (12) in 8 parties: Wendell Bergstrom, Lewis Blevins, James Brokau, Elton Fawks, May, Richard and Theodore Greer, Robert Meyers, Merle Norris, Peter Petersen, Jr., Marjie and Robert Trial.

Turkey Vulture and Broad-winged Hawk observed by Richard Greer; Yellow-bellied Sapsucker observed by Lewis Blevins and Peter Petersen, Jr. The Turkey Vulture was observed soaring for several minutes, with both the contrasting dark and light wings and small, flesh colored head noted.

2. BACKBONE STATE PARK (Mostly within the park, but all birds counted on the roadside trip, which included a trip to Independence and vicinity in Buchanan County). Dec. 25; 8:30 a.m. to 11 a.m.; 12 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Temp. 22 to 32; wind, none. Clear, with 2-3 inches of snow on ground. Observers (4) together: Mr. and Mrs. Earnest W. Steffen, Mr. and Mrs. Fred J. Pierce.

	1. Alledo, Ill.	2. Backbone State Park	3. Cedar Falls	4. Cedar Rapids	5. Clinton	6. Davenport	7. Des Moines	8. Estherville	9. Goldfield	10. Grundy Center	11. Hawarden	12. Iowa City	13. Jefferson	14. Lamoni	15. Lansing	16. Lehigh	17. Liscomb	18. Mt. Vernon	19. Northwood	20. Sioux City	21. Union Slough	22. Waterloo
Great Blue Heron	1	3	638	4750	46	1000						1300				4		65			147	1
Mallard Duck	350		12	60	2							5									3	1
Black Duck	2		1	8	1							1										
Pintail				1																		
Green-winged Teal					2																	
Redhead				8																		
Ring-necked Duck				1	16																	
Lesser Scaup				3	304																	
Common Goldeneye	5				1																	
Bufflehead					2																	
Hooded Merganser					3																	
Common Merganser	8			150	305							3				15						
Red-breasted Merganser					3																	
Turkey Vulture	1*				2*																	
Goshawk					1																	
Sharp-shinned Hawk	1	1			1																	
Cooper's Hawk					1																	
Red-tailed Hawk	37	5	9	14	21	54	11	3	2			35	1	9	4	2	1	1		5	2	4
Harlan's Hawk					2	6	1					2										
Red-shouldered Hawk	8		3	2	2							3	2									
Broad-winged Hawk	1*				2*																	
Rough-legged Hawk	15	8	4	1	14	1			14	2	1	24				11		4		1	1	13
Bald Eagle	2				8	91						2	10	3	9			2		1		
Marsh Hawk	15			1	1	1	2	1				2	1		1	2		2				
Sparrow Hawk	6	1		3	5	9	3					1										
Bobwhite	9				4	10						1	2			6	5	4		7		145
Ring-necked Pheasant	2	5	9	16	8	153		63	20	19	4	13	4									
King Rail					1*																	
Killdeer							2*											1*				
Common Snipe																						
Herring Gull						4																
Ring-billed Gull						5																
Mourning Dove	168	2	13	26	180	1		26	3	18	3	8				5	1	12		30		10
Screech Owl	2				2																	
Great Horned Owl	9	1	2	3	3	1	2	1	1	1	2	2	1	1	1					1	4	4
Barred Owl	6				1	1																
Long-eared Owl	3				3	2	2															
Short-eared Owl	4	1	2	2	4	16	3															
Belted Kingfisher	1	1	4	3	14	4	6															
Yellow-shafted Flicker	17	1	1	3	14	16	3	10	3	3	2	5	10	11		1	3	1		3	1	1
Pileated Woodpecker	9				2	2																
Red-bellied Woodpecker	41	2	20	13	14	61	12	3	4			15	6	7	4	9	3	5		2		2
Red-headed Woodpecker	4	15	2	4	1	2						1	1	6	7	3						44
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	1*																					
Hairy Woodpecker	17	1	16	4	5	51	10	6	7		1	6	2	6						2	12	4

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22
Downy Woodpecker	60	3	44	25	53	157	50	13	22	3	14	20	13	25	2	8	10	6	2	16	2	21
Horned Lark	45	6	10	41	15	89	82	39	5	8	16	7	18	15	24	4	12	15	4	4	4	25
Blue Jay	1395	125	107	58	297	467	34	82	50	250	7	141	24	23	1	43	19	13	5	1	1	57
Common Crow	99	1	190	65	113	281	145	41	15	9	56	46	24	23	1	27	8	40	9	42	29	39
Black-capped Chickadee	40	1	12	17	24	62	46	1	1	1	1	30	2	13	5	2	2	4	6	16	14	39
Tufted Titmouse	51	2	43	31	15	59	41	11	8	6	13	10	10	11	12	4	11	4	6	7	1	2
White-breasted Nuthatch	1	14	17	3	4	30	4	1	1	1	1	5	2	1	1	2	1	2	1	7	1	2
Red-breasted Nuthatch	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Brown Creeper	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Winter Wren	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Carolina Wren	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Mockingbird	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Brown Thrasher	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Robin	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Eastern Bluebird	15	1	1	5	6	3	2	1	1	1	1	2	1	3	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Golden-crowned Kinglet	4	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	4	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Cedar Waxwing	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Northern Shrike	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Loggerhead Shrike	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Shrike, sp.	463	125	111	11	1814	297	1110	10	200	500	34	64	130	163	5	140	83	47	7	2500	142	142
House Sparrow	1205	200	407	1092	2381	800	157	80	125	60	647	110	149	64	40	145	111	15	5000	250	250	8
Eastern Meadowlark	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Western Meadowlark	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Meadowlark sp.	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Redwinged Blackbird	50	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Rusty Blackbird	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Brewer's Blackbird	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Common Grackle	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Brown-headed Cowbird	252	9	94	59	175	218	131	14	4	5	4	109	9	92	28	4	13	24	1	28	36	36
Purple Finch	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Pine Siskin	46	6	34	24	227	57	57	4	11	2	37	4	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
American Goldfinch	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Red Crossbill	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Rufous-sided Towhee	231	30	356	333	446	699	317	258	20	36	120	311	87	251	33	38	10	37	40	165	119	119
Slate-colored Junco	800	10	77	99	636	1362	460	323	9	38	26	1042	37	515	92	18	259	47	30	350	277	277
Oregon Junco	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Tree Sparrow	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Chipping Sparrow	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Field Sparrow	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Harris' Sparrow	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
White-crowned Sparrow	39	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
White-throated Sparrow	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Fox Sparrow	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Lincoln's Sparrow	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Swain's Sparrow	7	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Song Sparrow	26	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Lapland Longspur	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Snow Bunting	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Number of Species	60	27	37	32	51	74	41	28	25	19	25	46	27	34	17	31	21	25	14	35	15	35
Number of Observers	12	4	12	9	12	40	8	6	1	2	1	1	3	6	1	1	2	3	2	13	4	10

Total Iowa List, 94 Species

*See data under station in body of article
 **No estimate made of numbers in flocks seen

3. CEDAR FALLS (Snag Creek, Black Hawk Park, Union Bridge, Goose Lake, Wyth Park, Leland's Pasture, Hartman Reserve, Byrnes Park). Dec. 26; 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Temp. 20 to 30; wind, none. Cloudy first third, clear rest of day. Two inches of snow on ground, ponds frozen, river partly open. Observers (12) in 3 parties: Martin L. Grant, Richard Barnett, Frances Crouter, Eleanor Eifert, Annette Haffner, Russell Hays, Mabelle Hinkley, Fred Holgate, Maxine Schwanke, Lois Sherman, Florence Spring, George Swanson.

4. CEDAR RAPIDS (7½-mile radius centering on the Federal Building, Cedar Lake, Shaver Park, north along Cedar River, Bever Park, Indian Creek, Lakeside; Ellis Park, Manhattan, Chain Lakes; Riverside Park, south along Cedar River, roadsides to Palo, Beverly). Dec. 31; 7:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Temp. 26 to 32; wind 15 m.p.h. from NW. Overcast to cloudy bright with 2-4 inches of snow. Creeks partly frozen. Observers (9) in 3 parties: Seddie Cogswell Jr., Mrs. Lucile Elson, Dr. J. Harold Ennis, Mrs. Leonard Grabau, Lillian Serbousek, Dr. and Mrs. Robert Vane, Pauline Wershofen, Myra Willis.

5. CLINTON (Same area as in previous years). Dec. 31; 7 a.m. to 5:15 p.m. Temp. 25 to 36; wind 8 to 12 m.p.h. from SW. Partly cloudy to overcast, ground covered with 2-4 inches of snow. River 3% open. Observers (12) in 5 parties: Lewis Blevins, Dale Dickinson, Elton Fawks, James Hodges Sr., James Hodges Jr., Fred, Jolene and Maurice Leshner, Jim Lewis, Peter Petersen Jr., Herb Troester, Mike Yeast.

Carolina and Winter Wrens and Ruby-crowned Kinglet seen by Fred Leshner; Snow Bunting by Lewis Blevins. All puddle ducks would have been missed without use of airplane.

6. DAVENPORT (15-mile diameter circle centered at the toll house on the Memorial Bridge over the Mississippi between Bettendorf, Iowa and Moline, Ill.). Dec. 26; 5:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Temp. 30 to 32; wind 10 m.p.h. from N. Overcast with snow flurries in a.m. 2-4 inches of snow. River 5% open. Observers (40) in 25 parties: Carl Bengston, Lewis Blevins, Harry Carl, Larry, Robert and Walter Dau, Dale Dickinson, Mr. and Mrs. Leo Doering, Dave Eldridge, John Erickson, Elton Fawks, Mr. and Mrs. Floyd Gold, Henry Goldschmidt, Ivan Graham, Dick Greer, Jim Hanssen, Mrs. Donna, Frances and Mrs. Hazel Johnson, Dave Krause, Fred and Rev. Maurice Leshner, Jim and Mrs. Thomas Lewis, Mrs. Philip McDermott, Tom Morrissey, Peter C. Petersen Jr., Mr. and Mrs. Peter C. Petersen Sr., Mr. and Mrs. Don Price, Mrs. Paul Ryan, Joe Schropp, Martin Strenzaag, Peter Strohbehn, Bob Trial, Mrs. Harry Warner, Mike Yeast.

Goshawk seen by one party at 150' through binoculars and telescope, both flying and perched. Another party observed it at 100' through binoculars; both saw very distinct eye line. Broad-winged Hawks seen at about 150' through binoculars; definitely only two bands on the tail. King Rail seen at 20' was a crippled bird. Lincoln Sparrow seen at 30' through binoculars, buffy wash across breast and fine side streaking noted in very good light. Ruby-crowned Kinglets observed by Dale Dickinson at close range for several minutes, each having eye-ring and no eye-lines seen. Chipping Sparrows reported by Walter Dau, Field Sparrows seen by Lewis Blevins and Peter Petersen Jr. The Oregon Junco, while possibly a hybrid, showed the plumage characteristics of this species and is designated accordingly.

7. DES MOINES (Fisher's Lake; Glendale and Pine Hill Cemeteries; Dale Maffitt Reservoir; Pioneer, Sycamore and Walnut Woods Parks; Flint Acres Access; Dove, Charles Sing Denman, Margo Frankel and Crocker Woods; 1600 Guthrie Ave., and Hartford Ave. near the Des Moines River). Jan. 2; 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Temp. 9 to 18; wind 15 m.p.h. from NW and 13 m.p.h. from WSW. Overcast, clearing in midafternoon. Three inches of snow, very little open water. Observers (8) in 5 parties: Mrs. A. J. Binsfeld, Mrs. Dwight Brooke, Woodward H. Brown, Oliver W. Graves, Mrs. Lester W. Haskell, Dr. Robert E. G. Norton, Mary Elizabeth Peck, Mary Ellen Wartens.

Rufous-sided Towhee was *p.e. arcticus*. Killdeer were seen separately, and by different parties.

8. ESTHERVILLE (Ft. Defiance State Park, prairie areas to Spirit Lake; Ryan Lake—dry lake bed with multiflora rose plantings—and Fred Wolden farm home in timber between Ingham and High Lakes). Dec. 27; 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Temp. 2 to 14; wind 5 m.p.h. from NW. Partly cloudy with 8 inches of snow. Observers (6) in 2 parties: Mr. and Mrs. Fred Wolden, Mrs. Helen La Doux, Mrs. Pearl Osher, Mr. and Mrs. Myrle Jones.

9. GOLDFIELD (10-mile radius centered at Goldfield). Dec. 29; 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Temp. 20 to 32; wind 4 to 7 m.p.h. from N. Ground covered with 2 inches of new snow, river frozen. Observers Rev. Mills and Dean Roosa.

10. GRUNDY CENTER (Grundy Center to Steamboat Rock to Eldora). Dec. 29; 10:25 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Temp. 25; wind 5 m.p.h. SW. Sun shining. Observers: Mr. and Mrs. Harold B. Brown.

11. HAWARDEN (Oak Grove State Park, points along Big Sioux River and southwestern Sioux County), Dec. 24; 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.; Temp. mid 20's; wind calm, skies clear, 3 inches of snow on ground. Roy Mullenburg.

Ruby-crowned Kinglets seen from about 50' through 7x50 binoculars in very good light. Wing bar noted, lack of eye line not mentioned, but general olive coloration noted.

12. IOWA CITY (Same area as in previous years). Dec. 23; 6:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Temp. -11 to 13; wind SE 8 m.p.h. Light snow on ground, snow flurries all day. Observers (11) in 3 parties: Dave Anciaux, F. W. Kent, Dr. T. H. Kent, Fred Leshner, Jim Lewis, Thomas Morrissey, Dr. and Mrs. Max Pepernik, Peter Petersen Jr., W. M. Weld, Mike Yeast.

Brown Thrashers were seen at two places. Cowbirds consisted of two pairs.

13. JEFFERSON (Goose Lake Reserve (marsh), Raccoon River just south of Jefferson, and open country southeast of Jefferson). Dec. 31; 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Temp. 25 to 31; wind 12 m.p.h. from NW. Sunny, snow in shaded areas only. Observers (3) together: Bob Faaborg, Barry Martin, Larry Mc-Millin.

14. LAMONI (Parts of a 15-mile diameter circle centered 2½ miles east of Lamoni—farm land, roadsides, river bank, woods and farm yards). Jan. 1; 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Temp. 25 to 31; wind 3 m.p.h. SE. Partly cloudy, ground bare, ponds and streams frozen. Observers (6) in 3 parties: Madeline Bal-lantyne, J. Donald Gillaspey, Dorothy Rauch, Rita Reynard, Mr. and Mrs. Ralph Silver.

15. LANSING (Lansing to New Albin—side trip from Kain's Siding to Big Slough—return via Sand Cove and Gruber Ridge. Lansing to west end of Lynxville Dike and return as far as Wexford—side trip to Heytman's). Dec. 28; 12 m. to 3 p.m. Temp. 15 to 29; wind 3 to 5 m.p.h. S. 100% overcast. LeRoy W. Sowl.

16. LEHIGH (15-mile circle, including Dolliver State Park). Dec. 26; 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. Temp. 18 to 36; wind 4 to 7 m.p.h. N. Observer, Dean Roosa. One of the Sparrow Hawks was trapped and banded.

17. LISCOMB (15-mile circle centered at Iowa River 2 miles west of Albion). Jan. 1; 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Temp. 17 to 22; no wind. 100% overcast, foggy in a.m. light snow cover, streams partly open. Observers (2) together: Beth Proescholdt and Terry Proescholdt.

18. MT. VERNON (same territory as previous years). Dec. 24; 7:45 a.m. to 5 p.m. Temp. 1 to 17; wind 5 m.p.h. Weather clear, ground largely clear of snow. Observers (3) together: Seddie Cogswell Jr., J. David Ennis, J. Harold Ennis.

Two adult Bald Eagles and one Common Snipe carefully observed at relatively short range.

19. NORTHWOOD (most of the two north-central townships of Worth Co.). Dec. 26; 12:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. Observers, Mrs. John Bottleman, Mrs. Fred Oetken.

20. SIOUX CITY (Logan Park, Graceland, Floyd Park and Memorial Park Cemeteries; Lakeport Road; Half Moon Lake; Riverside Park; Scout Camp area of Stone Park; Old Highway 12). Dec. 26; 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Temp. 15 to 28; wind 15 m.p.h. NW. Clear, 3/10 inch of snow on ground, rivers and streams open. Observers (13) in 7 parties: Miss Eunice Barrett, Mrs. W. W. Barrett, Mr. and Mrs. P. B. Davison, Mr. and Mrs. Darrell Hanna, George Marsh, L. J. Nickolson, Mr. and Mrs. Robert L. Nickolson, Mr. and Mrs. A. H. Schatz, Miss Gertrude Weaver.

21. UNION SLOUGH (National Wildlife Refuge—2077 acre waterfowl refuge). Dec. 31; 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Temp. 20 to 30; wind 16 m.p.h. Cloudy. 2 inches of snow, water frozen except for a tile outlet. Harold H. Burgess.

22. WATERLOO (Wapsipinicon River Valley from County Park of the Road of Seven Bridges to Sweet Marsh, including tributaries Crane Creek and Plum Creek, and adjoining prairie farm lands). Dec. 30; 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Temp. 9 to 40; wind 0 to 6 m.p.h. WSW. Skies clear with few high cirrus clouds. Ground covered with 4 to 6 inches of snow. Running water in creeks and rivers. Observers (10) in 1 party: Myrle M. Burk, Martin L. Grant, Annette Haffner, Russell Hays, Mrs. Clarice Hewitt, Margaret Nagel, Brooks Shafer, George Swanson, Deborah Williams, Mrs. Eloise Williams.

ADDITIONAL BIRD NOTES WHICH ACCOMPANIED THE CENSUSES

Cedar Rapids.—Canada Goose, Common Goldeneye and Bobwhite were also seen during the count period.

Clinton.—Canada Goose and Herring Gull were seen but not on count day.

Davenport.—Other species seen during the census period: Pigeon Hawk, Common Snipe, Barn Owl, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Bewick's Wren and Rusty Blackbird.



OBSERVING DUCKS AND EAGLES AT LOCK #14 ON THE DAVENPORT CHRISTMAS CENSUS SHOWING MIKE YEAST, PETER PETERSEN JR., MRS. PAUL RYAN AND FRED LESHER

(Photo courtesy of Sunday Times-Democrat, taken by Harry Boll)

Des Moines.—Common Goldeneye, Bufflehead, Ring-necked Pheasant, Screech Owl, Short-eared Owl, Red-headed Woodpecker, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Cedar Waxwing, Shrike, White-crowned Sparrow and Fox Sparrow were also seen during the period.

Estherville.—Bohemian Waxwings, Mourning Doves, Golden-crowned Kinglets and Purple Finch were seen in the area shortly before the census. Longspurs were seen much earlier but none has been seen for the past month.

Goldfield.—Robin was observed singing during count period, but not on day of count.

Grundy Center.—Two Red-bellied Woodpeckers and two Short-eared Owls were seen on Jan. 1, and on Jan. 4. Sparrow Hawk, Red-headed Woodpeckers, Tufted Titmice, Red-tailed Hawk and Goldfinch were seen. "A good year for Short-eared Owls and Tree Sparrows."

Iowa City.—There were also seen during the count period Sparrow Hawk, Saw-whet Owl, Robin, Northern Shrike, Harris' Sparrow and Lapland Longspur.

Jefferson.—Other species seen were Robin, Golden-crowned Kinglet and Common Grackle.



SHORT-EARED OWL, A MUCH MORE COMMON BIRD IN IOWA
DURING THE PAST WINTER

(Fred W. Kent photo)

Lamoni.—Bobwhite, Ring-necked Pheasant and Common Grackle were seen during the census period.

Lehigh.—Short-eared Owl seen during census period but not on day of count. One of the Sparrow Hawks was trapped, banded and released on the day of count.

Mt. Vernon.—A Yellow-shafted Flicker was seen on Dec. 26.

Union Slough.—Two Short-eared Owls were seen during the count period but not on the count day.

Dean M. Roosa, who submitted census reports for Goldfield and Lehigh, drove from Manly to Decorah on Dec. 27. He and Patt Lake observed the following species on the trip: Red-tailed Hawk, 2; Rough-legged Hawk, 6; Sparrow Hawk, 3, one of which was trapped, banded and released; Ring-necked Pheasant, 19; Yellow-shafted Flicker, 2; Red-bellied Woodpecker, 1; Hairy Woodpecker, 2; Downy Woodpecker, 3; Blue Jay, 2; Common Crow, 50; White-breasted Nuthatch, 2; Starling, 18; House Sparrow, 8; Western Meadowlark, 4; Cardinal, 1; Goldfinch 1; Slate-colored Junco, 12; Tree Sparrow, 17.

ADDENDUM. WHEATLAND—Dec. 31, four hours spent in the field. Species observed—Cooper's, Red-tailed, Rough-legged and Sparrow Hawks; Ring-necked Pheasant; Mourning Dove; Yellow-shafted Flicker; Pileated, Red-bellied, Red-headed, Hairy and Downy Woodpeckers; Horned Lark; Blue Jay; Crow; Black-capped Chickadee; Tufted Titmouse; White-breasted Nuthatch; Starling; House Sparrow; Meadowlark (sp); Redwinged Blackbird; Cardinal; Goldfinch; Slate-colored Junco; Tree and Song Sparrows. Observers: C. Esther Copp and Dolly Copp.

THE FALL MEETING AT PIKE'S PEAK STATE PARK

By DR. MYRLE BURK

R.R. #2
WATERLOO, IOWA

September 10 and 11, 1960, sixty members and friends of the Iowa Ornithologists' Union participated in the fall migration to Pike's Peak State Park, McGregor, Iowa. Trips to Yellow River State Forest, Effigy Mounds National Monument, Wyalusing State Park (in Wisconsin), and the home of Althea Sherman at National, were made.

Saturday evening Mr. L. J. Lindemann, McGregor, thoughtfully provided the visitors with delightful entertainment. He showed colored slides of the flowering plants of northeast Iowa, which he had photographed.

Sunday morning Harold Burgess (Titonka) and Dale Hein (Ames) were the leaders of a trip to see the early morning flight of the Wood Ducks on the Mississippi. Later Dean Roosa, Lehigh, and Myrle L. Jones, Estherville, demonstrated netting and banding of birds at Yellow River State Forest. Species banded included the Black-capped Chickadee, Catbird, Yellowthroat, Goldfinch Rose-breasted Grosbeak, as well as others.

Those who climbed the winding trails of Effigy Mounds National Monument pondered on the civilization of those people of a thousand years ago, who laboriously carried the soil up the trails to build the mounds, a huge bear, conical, oval or round in form; some of which were used as burial places. Near the top of the ridge a pair of Cardinals, nesting late, were much disturbed by the advent of the bird watchers.

On the tables at Pike's Peak State Park the culinary experts of the group spread a bounteous potluck dinner, which was duly appreciated by the lusty partaking of the hungry bird watchers. Renewing of old friendships and the making of new, the primary object of the fall meetings, occupied the short afternoon.

Homeward bound, many stopped to visit the home of Dr. Althea Sherman, near National (*Iowa Bird Life*, June 1943, June 1954, December 1952, March 1952). The Chimney Swift tower stands behind the vacant house. We climbed the encircling steps to the chimney; the younger and more daring entered and climbed the ladder to its top. On the outside walls desks and cupboards were built; now they are occupied by mice and rats. How shameful that this unique building, designed by a woman of superior intellect and imagination for the study of the Chimney Swift should be abandoned!

Attendance:—AMES: Dale Hein. BOONE: Mr. and Mrs. Wayne Partidge. CEDAR FALLS: Eleanor Eifert, Annette Haffner, Mr. and Mrs. John O'Connell, Mrs. Blanche Schwanke, Maxine Schwanke, Mrs. Florence Spring. CEDAR RAPIDS: Mr. and Mrs. Dalmar Beck, Mr. and Mrs. John Cabalka, Eleanore Fullerton, Mr. and Mrs. Steven M. Pattee, Lillian Serbousek, Mildred Webb, Pauline Wershofen, Myra Willis. DAVENPORT: Peter C. Petersen, Jr. DES MOINES: Mr. and Mrs. H. R. Peasley. ESTHERVILLE: Mr. and Mrs. Myrle L. Jones. FARLEY: Mr. and Mrs. George Crossley. IOWA CITY: Mr. and Mrs. Howard Crew. LEHIGH: Dean M. Roosa. MARSHALLTOWN: Mr. and Mrs. Homer Rinehart, Mrs. L. R. Grimes. MCGREGOR: Mr. and Mrs. L. J. Lindemann. OELWEIN: Mr. and Mrs. Earl Alton. OTTUMWA: Mr. and Mrs. Charles C. Ayres, Jr., Mr. and Mrs. M. K. Hallberg. POSTVILLE: Mr. and Mrs. Arthur J. Palas. PRINCETON: Mr. and Mrs. John Clemons. TITONKA: Mr. and Mrs. Harold H. Burgess, Tommy, Mary, and Barbara Burgess. WATERLOO: Myrle M. Burk, Mabelle Hinckley, Rodger and Tommy Moon, Brooks Shafer. WEST BEND: Mr. and Mrs. Fred Fisher. WEST BRANCH: Mr. and Mrs. Fred Leshner. WINTHROP: Mr. and Mrs. Fred Pierce.

"COLLECT THE BIRD"*

By L. L. SNYDER

Curator, Department of Ornithology, Royal Ontario Museum, Ontario, Canada,

Truth is a state established by fact or reality without question of mistake. This is the goal of science. To approach this state we must surely hold a respect for our objective, recognize the weaknesses of our methods, and attempt to improve them. In the relatively simple matter of recording the dispersal of birds there is reason for concern as was so ably pointed out by the late Dr. Josselyn Van Tyne (*Wilson Bull.*, 68: 63-67, 1956).

The great mass of data that is now pouring into our international and local journals gives us a better picture of current ornithological events than ever before. For the vast majority of common birds the sight record is adequate and acceptable. Such error as might creep in is ironed out by the weight of mass data and an approximation of truth results. It is a different matter when we are dealing with the unusual. It has become customary with some editors to print the name of a regional rarity in bold type. This is a splendid idea, for, whether it was intended or not, this is a warning. By and large, a sight record of the unusual has low face value in print unless it has been checked and rechecked and finally fully and clearly documented. Even then all we have accomplished is to present to the best of our ability all circumstantial evidence before the ultimate court, namely ornithological posterity. We should be no less careful than the law. Unfortunately, it is seldom feasible, because of time and costs, to document completely such reports in print.

Error in report is scarcely a matter of veracity or lack of skill. There is a multitude of inescapable pitfalls in field identification. Even more important, there is an almost inevitable tendency to rationalize from an imperfect premise imposed by time and circumstance. If there is present an element of over-zealousness, or the sportive or competitive, or some lack of respect for scientific caution, what may result?

Deliberation and veneration may not characterize our whole way of life, but we cannot advance the science of birds with haste and without respect for the scientific method. "Add water and stir" may substitute for cookery these days but "John Doe saw a so-and-so on such-and-such a date" does not make an authentic record new for a region. "Collect the bird", says Ludlow Griscom, according to Roger Tory Peterson and James Fisher in *Wild America*, (p. 106), and the authors add, "Scientific ornithological tradition demands that the first record of a new species for a region be substantiated by a specimen." The writer would add that in his opinion this procedure should not be limited to the first record. Ornithological knowledge and judgment should be applied in every case.

There are some people who object to the collecting of birds. They are inclined to believe that this procedure is unnecessary and inconsistent with the urgency of conservation. I wish to state that it is necessary, and it has a negligible effect on bird populations. Frederick C. Lincoln (*Auk*, 48:540, 1931) presents a list of the known causes of death among banded birds, giving the agencies in the order of frequency. Next to the bottom, immediately before miscellaneous causes which includes being struck down by golf balls, we find scientific collectors. He shows that this cause of death amounts to 000015 of 1 per cent of all known causes, and we can be sure that all such cases were reported.

(Reprinted from the *Oriole* 24: 21-25, 1959 and adapted from "Collecting Birds and Conservation", *The Ontario Field Biologist*, 12: 16-18, 1958, with the author's permission.)

Among the factors which enter into objection to collecting birds is human emotion. It is my belief that the capacity for emotion is one of the highest of human attributes, but I also believe that the capacity to control one's emotions is higher. Let me illustrate. I have on my desk a recent clipping explaining a new industry in the northern United States. This firm supplies beautiful caskets for the burial of pets and wild birds picked up dead. One item at moderate cost is made of plastic. Another, showing more consideration to be deceased, is a ceramic product complete with rose-bud on top. The account reveals that these caskets are becoming very popular, selling like hot-cakes, and that more and more "ornithologists" are among the customers. I reach the heights of my emotional control by saying that I doubt the last clause in the statement. Though the above may seem irrelevant to my thesis, it is inserted to demonstrate an attitude with which ornithologists must cope. And, believe it or not, as I was writing these sentences, a letter was placed on my desk from a young scientist who sacrifices his time at a Wisconsin nature camp in summer disseminating knowledge and furthering understanding of this world in which we live. I quote: "While at the Camp I continue my own lines of research and this requires that I also continue to collect. Under present conditions all of this must be done under-cover so that we will not offend the campers." Is science being hamstrung by emotions in the United States while Russia forges ahead?

The foregoing is intended to reveal certain difficulties. Collecting specimens is a means of reducing inaccuracies. Since it is apparent that many students of birds have had no opportunity to reach an understanding of this method of establishing fact, I have tabulated below some general statements intended to be helpful.

- 1 Collecting specimens is simply a matter of gathering facts to further direct observation. It will never be desirable to cease gathering facts and make direct observation as was done during the Dark Ages.
- 2 Specimens for study and comparison are the special tools of the museum sciences. Although the museum researcher is interested in living organisms, without specimens his particular basis for study (identification, classification, zoogeography, evolution) would not exist, in fact neither would museums.
- 3 Nature is dynamic, so that fact-gathering is a continuing process, never completed. Furthermore, all the museums of the world put together would not be a complete collection.
- 4 Specimens collected, preserved, labelled, and carefully housed in a research collection are perpetually useful. A research collection is not unlike a library of books or a bureau of standards. Specimens are not expendable in the ordinary sense and can be referred to during the development of new ideas or re-examined for verification or rejection of established concepts.
- 5 Collecting birds for research is precisely the same business as collecting butterflies, bullfrogs, or bears, except that it may elicit a different emotional response from some. Ironically, many scientific collectors of birds have been responsible for sharpening the public's emotional regard for birds.
- 6 In the history of bird conservation in the United States many of the most earnest proponents were, or are, scientific collectors. To mention but a few, we have Chapman, Griscom, and Gabrielson. Undoubtedly birds, as well as the study of them, profited from their collecting.
- 7 Without the background of knowledge based on collected specimens, no adequate bird protection law could be framed, and no authoritative bird book could be written.

- 8 Without specimens there could not have been an Audubon as we know him, and ornithological illustrators of our times such as Fuertes, Sutton, and Eckelberry could not have been ornithological illustrators.
- 9 In addition to the needs of research and illustration, specimens remain virtually indispensable in teaching, either with a cultural approach or in the training of scientists.

It is presumed that there are people who would endorse the foregoing but would question the value of collecting regional rarities which excite so much popular interest. This attitude is understandable if we acknowledge that the interest of most bird observers is more pronouncedly stimulated by the unusual. It is also evident that this interest has a value, but there is no way of measuring and weighing against the value of a collected specimen. What are the values of a collected rarity, those extra-limital erratic birds?

- (a) An erratic bird collected, labelled, and preserved proves beyond all doubt, both to us and to posterity, that a representative of a given species did occur extra-liminally at a certain time. No other evidence is as absolute, and the specimen can be referred to again and again. This is the simple demand of science, especially when dealing with the unusual.
- (b) A collected specimen can be weighed and measured; its sex determined by dissection; its age class established; its normalities or abnormalities observed, the latter including starvation, injury, disease, parasites, hybridity, and other matters. Such biological examination may even indicate whence it came.
- (c) A specimen taken extra-liminally often marks the occasion when some biological event is taking place far away in the heart of the range of the species involved. The specimen is simply an undeniable basis for correlation, now or at some time in the future.
- (d) A regional rarity is not always a waif or stray. It may prove to be a pioneer of range change, and thus a collected specimen becomes historically important. Certainly the collecting of a pioneer will not thwart population expansion if it is underway, any more than Indian massacres stopped the settlement of this continent.
- (e) It is well known that many waifs and strays do not survive displacement. A specimen in a research collection will be useful for an estimated thousand years or more. Its remains on a beach or field make small contribution to the scavenger or soil.

It may also be presumed that there are people who might concede all the foregoing but would still feel that there are no established ethical practices among collectors, or there might be collectors who have not considered the ethic side of their procedure. Here is my interpretation of the collectors' Credo: I recognize—

That, in collecting specimens of birds under authorized permit to further science and learning, the collector must accept both technical and ethical responsibilities;

That, a collector is obligated to prepare specimens properly and to document fully labels associated with them;

That, the preparation of a significant series is often necessary, but the taking of large numbers is unwarranted if only a small selection is to be preserved;

That, a private collector should regard his collection as a public trust, guard it against destruction, and arrange for its eventual disposition where its usefulness and perpetual care are probable;

That, a collector should be discreet at all time in pursuing his work to avoid offending persons unfamiliar with his purpose.

A LAMENT TO HENRY DAVID THOREAU

March 17, 1958

My Dear Henry:

After my usual seasonal perusal of "Early Spring in Massachusetts", a book of yours which you never saw in print, I suddenly felt a jarring sensation. It came to me that you were studying almost pure Americana one hundred years ago on this same date, when you wrote: "The air is full of bluebirds, I hear them far and near on all sides of the hill, warbling in the tree-tops, though I do not distinctly see them". Today, vast physical changes have come over your beloved Massachusetts and even to the farthestmost point you reached in your journeyings—Redwood Falls, Minnesota, the changes in natural history, and bird life in particular, are indeed saddening.

As I read through your journal on "Spring", I noticed that you recognized your native birds with alacrity and with little to distract you from foreign bird calls. Today that is impossible anywhere in the United States. The first House Sparrows were introduced in Boston in 1858, just one hundred years ago. The first transplanting did not survive, and it was not until 1869 that birds released in Rhode Island multiplied and spread to Boston. Thank goodness, because I don't think your gentle soul could have stood this invasion of tramps.

The next transplanting of the foreign invaders, which now bring horror to those of us who have ears turned to the lovely songs of our native birds, was in 1872 in Ohio, when the Starling was introduced to our fair shores. This species was at first slow to acclimate itself, but, once settled, it spread with amazing speed and now blankets the entire land like a black plague. Your lovely Eastern Bluebird, the ethereal harbinger of spring, and the beneficial Purple Martin are the especial prey of the Starling. The Starling drives these two birds from their homes and is as vicious a killer as the Blue Jay and the Common Grackle in disposing of the young Purple Martins dragged from their nests.

It is in the voice department, however, that you can be glad you never heard this bird during your time along your winding rivers and about your then still vibrant ponds and lakes. Some Starlings are more vocal than others and can give the calls and portions of the songs of several dozens of birds. A warning to be well heeded in the twentieth century on a spring-like day in mid-March, is never to enter in your diary as you could, kind Thoreau, the word Eastern Bluebird, Killdeer, and many of the other birds by call alone. Today, you must pin down your bird. One can never again say, as you did, Mr. Thoreau, that Eastern Bluebirds were all around you, warbling, but "I do not distinctly see them".

The population of the United States has increased several times since the days when you lived on the shores of peaceful Walden Pond. The result is that mostly the native birds suffer, when woodlands are chopped down and marshes filled in to provide home-sites for the ever-increasing numbers of new families. Many of the native birds are decreasing in numbers, and actually fading from the American scene. The above-mentioned Eastern Bluebird and Purple Martin are not abundant any more and are becoming less common every year. This progress and spread of civilization in the United States has eliminated much of the habitat of your beloved mysterious "night warbler", the Ovenbird, and it can now be found nesting only in the more remote hinterlands.

In closing, I would like to add I am extremely sorry that, when you made your interesting trip up the Minnesota River by steam boat in 1861, when you reached Redwood Falls, your health did not permit an extended trip to the then vast prairie stretching out across the Dakotas. A trip in 1861 would have been a treasure-chest of bird-watching memories, for you would have

found the beautiful Chestnut-collared Longspur, the McCown's Longspur, the elusive Baird's Sparrow, the lovely voiced Sprague's Pipit, the striking black and white Lark Bunting, the Burrowing Owl, and many other interesting birds. Today, most of these birds are no longer part of the fauna of the Redwood Falls area, as the land there has now become part of that vast food-producing area to supply America's burgeoning population. The prairie as you trod it for all too short miles has been erased by modern and what is now called intensive farming, and the prairie bird life has been almost totally eliminated by it. Such vast, convulsive changes have been taking place here on the western prairies in the last few years, I can now better understand your own misgivings at the changes toward progress being made right under your own wandering dusty boots in the fields and hills about Concord and Walden.

Respectfully yours,
William Youngworth



HENRY DAVID THOREAU

Thoreau was born in Concord, Massachusetts, July 12, 1817, and died there May 6, 1862. This portrait was taken when he was in his vigor. It is said that he had a wary, transitory air and that his deep-set blue eyes were ever on the alert for the sight of a bird, animal or even a lowly turtle.

Permission to use this half-tone was kindly granted by the Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, Massachusetts, on December 5, 1960. Half-tone, a gift of Wm. Youngworth.

SPRING CONVENTION SET FOR MAY 5-7 AT OTTUMWA

The thirty-ninth annual meeting of the Iowa Ornithologists' Union will be held on May 5-7, 1961, at Ottumwa, Iowa. The program for Friday evening, May 5, will consist of a film on Alaska by Roy Schultz of Castalia, Iowa. Mr. Schultz is a former guide in Alaska and returns each year to hunt. He will also show a short film on some of the recent events held by the Northeast Iowa Audubon Club.

Field trips will be held on both Saturday and Sunday mornings. A mist netting and banding demonstration is being planned and will be included in the Saturday morning field trips.

Papers will be given during the morning and afternoon on Saturday. Speakers will include Dr. Peter Laude of Iowa City presenting "The Anatomy of the Vocal Chords of Birds and Classification of Bird Calls and Songs"; Dr. Arnold Haugen of Iowa State University speaking on "The Wildlife Research Program at Iowa State University"; and a paper on "Results of the Winter 1960-1961 Bald Eagle Survey in the Mississippi Valley" by Elton Fawks of East Moline, Illinois. The "slidefest" was so successful last year that it is planned to repeat this feature. Bring ten or fifteen slides and give them to the program chairman, Dean Roosa, by noon on Saturday.

The banquet speaker will be Robert Elgin of Carlisle, Iowa, showing his color movie on hawks and falconery. Mr. Elgin has served as consultant on birds of prey to the American Museum of Natural History and is considered one of the greatest living authorities on falconery in the country. He will bring live, trained falcons to the program. This should be a very interesting meeting and it is hoped many members will attend.

OBITUARY

It is with regret that we note the passing of Mrs. Walter Pike of Coggon. Mr. Pike has been a member of the Iowa Ornithologist's Union since 1946. Mrs. Pike is survived by her husband and a son, Robert, of Athens, Georgia, and passed away on Feb. 14, 1961.

GENERAL NOTES

Golden Eagle in Monona County.—On November 22, 1960, while on a field trip between Ticonic and Castana, the writer saw a fine immature Golden Eagle. The above area is rough, marginal farm land and should long ago have been made into a state game refuge. The eagle was seen soaring above the timber and the white basal portion of the tail with the dark terminal band was clearly noted. If comparison in size was needed I was soon accommodated, for on sweeping the glasses above the eagle I saw a much smaller, light colored bird just beginning a stoop attack on the eagle. At the close of the stoop this hawk flared its tail and the bright red was easily seen. The majestic size of the Golden Eagle was clearly seen when compared to one of our largest hawks, the Red-tailed Hawk.—WM. YOUNG WORTH, 3119 East Second Street, Sioux City, Iowa.

Lapland Longspurs at Feeding Station.—In the spring of 1960 we had a prolonged siege of heavy snow and low temperatures which gave us a rare opportunity for close observation of some ground-feeding birds which are normally of a wary nature. This period began with a six inch snow on Feb. 23 and lasted until March 26. During this time there was little wind and very little drifting with the result that every foot of ground carried a snow cover of one to two feet in depth. Under normal weather conditions, strong winds would blow most of the snow off of plowed ground and bare fields and, with a little melting, areas of bare ground would appear on which ground-feeding birds could feed.

As a result of our abnormal weather, the only bare ground in the entire countryside was the roadways which were kept scraped off by snowplows. Horned Larks soon flocked in by the hundreds to feed on the small quantities of grain and feed which spilled or leaked from trucks and wagons onto the road. During much of this period approximately 100 Horned Larks per mile could be counted as they fed on the main country roads. At night it was common for them to roost on the bare roadway or in a niche of the snowbank pushed out on each side of the road by the snowplows. When driving at night thru a deep cut in the snowbanks it was not uncommon to see a continuous stream of birds rise up into the lights ahead of the car like big snowflakes in reverse.

By almost daily shovelling, I was able to keep a small area on a high road grade in front of our house free of snow. Liberal quantities of seed screenings placed there attracted Horned Larks immediately. They seemed to feed all day long from before sunrise until after sunset. Several times we enticed Horned Larks to our doorstep only two feet from the house.

On March 6 I was studying about 100 Horned Larks feeding on the parking lot of the Lamoni Packing Plant. Being a Sunday, there was no activity on the grounds so the birds could feed undisturbed on the grain scattered from feed trucks. I observed two Lapland Longspurs among this flock and was able to study them at leisure.

At the feeding area on the road in front of my house, Lapland Longspurs appeared among the Horned Larks on nine days during this period, in numbers from one to eight at a time. I parked the auto by this feeding area and the birds became accustomed to it. On several occasions I was able to sit inside the car and observe the birds feeding on the ground only 10 to 15 feet away. In contrast to the Horned Larks, the Longspurs fed for short periods only and were absent much of the time.

This feeding behavior came to an abrupt end after March 26, when temperatures started zooming and half of the snow cover disappeared in two days. With the first appearance of any bare ground in the fields the Horned Larks deserted my road-side feeding station entirely.—J. DONALD GILLASPEY, Lamoni, Iowa.

Observation of Whimbrels.—Sunday, May 26, 1960, was a beautiful day, so about eleven o'clock in the morning Mrs. Laude and I started out to cover our favorite birding territory around the Coralville reservoir.

Our area for birding in this region was somewhat limited this spring as the Coralville flood control dam was in operation and the water in the Coralville reservoir, created by this dam, was so high that a great deal of our territory was under water and also the bottom had gone out of many of the roads making other areas inaccessible.



WHIMBRELS NEAR IOWA CITY
(Fred W. Kent photo)

On this particular day, we chose to follow the road which goes from the Iowa City-Cedar Rapids road to Amana on the north side of the Iowa River. The water level of the reservoir was so high that the shore line in many places came up to the road and in no place was very far from the road. So we had an excellent opportunity to study shore birds of which there was a large number. Also there was a wide expanse of open water for water birds.

Of course, we were interested in looking for land birds and where ever the roads were passable we made side trips away from the reservoir and were successful in observing a great variety of land birds. We also made it a point to visit a portion of a meadow where shooting stars and devil's paint brushes were in full bloom.

The Du Pont bridge is the only bridge across the Iowa River between the Iowa City-Cedar Rapids road and Amana and the Johnson County road O passes over it. On this day, two miles of the road was under water. We drove to the edge of the water so that we could have the best opportunity to study the excellent mud flats and shore line on each side of the road.

I was using the twenty power telescope, which was clamped to the car window, to survey the area east of the road. Mrs. Laude was using her binocular to survey the area west of the road. Suddenly she exclaimed "Let me have the scope quick as there are some large shore birds out there that I can't recognize." There were four of them in some oat stubble. Through the telescope we were able to observe the following distinguishing characteristics:—

1. They were the largest shore birds that we had seen (The oat stubble in the picture is a good scale by which to measure the size of the birds)
2. The long bill with the conspicuous downward curve.
3. The stripes on the head and particularly the eye stripe.
4. The light breast.

The only such bird described by Peterson is the Whimbrel or the Hudsonian Curlew. As Mrs. Laude and I had seen a number of them on Nantucket Island a few years ago, we were sure of our identification; but we

wanted some one to verify such identification so we hurried back to Iowa City as rapidly as traffic would permit to try to contact Fred Kent. Luckily he was at home so when I told him of our observation and gave him the location, he, Mrs. Kent and the Morton Welds, went out immediately and were delighted to find the birds still there. There were five instead of four. The light was good so Fred obtained some very good pictures.

Observation time:—

15 minutes by the Laudes with a twenty power telescope

20 minutes by the Kents and the Welds with a 30 power telescope.

While Fred was taking the pictures, he heard the Yellow-breasted Chat calling from some shrubs a short distance up the road.

The Bent record shows that the last Whimbrel seen in Iowa was at Crystal Lake, in Hancock Co., May 25, 1895, and also that they were seen in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, September 9, 1903.

Bent also states that the Hudsonian Curlew is mainly shore feeders.

Wm. L. Dawson (in Bent) makes the following statement:—"Hudsonian Curlews putter about in listless lookout for passing insects or else squat on the sand, tuck the bill under the wing and loose themselves in dreams. There is always, at least one wary fellow on guard".—PETER LAUDE AND FRED KENT, Iowa City, Iowa.

Seventy-eight species observed in Goodale Conservation Area, Chickasaw County.—During the course of some research on helminths of passerine birds thirty-eight species of passerines were collected and forty species were observed in the northwest corner of Chickasaw County from October 1959 through September 1960. The collections and observations were made in an area extending one-half mile in radius from the center of the Goodale Conservation Area. It was through the courtesy of the Chickasaw County Conservation Board that the study was made. The identification of many of the collected birds were verified by Dr. Martin L. Grant of Iowa State Teachers College, Cedar Falls.

The following birds were collected: Eastern Kingbird, Crested Flycatcher, Eastern Phoebe, Least Flycatcher, Eastern Wood Pewee, Horned Lark, Barn Swallow, Blue Jay, Black-capped Chickadee, White-breasted Nuthatch, House Wren, Catbird, Brown Thrasher, Robin, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Starling, Yellow Warbler, Myrtle Warbler, Yellowthroat, Wilson's Warbler, American Redstart, Bobolink, Eastern Meadowlark, Western Meadowlark, Redwinged Blackbird, Rusty Blackbird, Common Grackle, Cardinal, Common Redpoll, Goldfinch, Slate-colored Junco, Tree Sparrow, Harris' Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow, Fox Sparrow, Lincoln's Sparrow, Swamp Sparrow, and Song Sparrow.

The following birds were observed: Pied-billed Grebe, Great Blue Heron, Black-crowned Night Heron, Green Heron, American Bittern, Mallard, Pintail, Blue-winged Teal, Shoveler, Wood Duck Lesser Scaup, Red-tailed Hawk, Red-shouldered Hawk, Rough-legged Hawk, Marsh Hawk, Sparrow Hawk, Coot, Killdeer Solitary Sandpiper, Herring Gull, Mourning Dove, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Long-eared Owl, Nighthawk, Chimney Swift, Ruby-throated Hummingbird, Yellow-shafted Flicker, Red-headed Woodpecker, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Hairy Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Rough-winged Swallow, Crow, Eastern Bluebird, Northern Shrike, Black-and-white Warbler, Blackpoll Warbler, Baltimore Oriole, Dickcissel, and Field Sparrow.—CHARLES J. ELLIS, Iowa State Teachers College, Cedar Falls, Iowa.

REVISION OF GENERAL NOTES

A change in the make-up of the General Notes Section will, we believe, make this part of **Iowa Bird Life** more valuable and of greater interest. It is planned to limit the material included here to observations which are unusual by reason of the date, the scarcity of the species, or the numbers seen, and examples of unusual behavior or feeding habits.

For example, a Myrtle Warbler on November 14 would be of interest whereas the same species on May 15 or September 15 would be commonplace. Fifty or 60 Blue Jays in migration would be unusual although 15 or 20 would not. Other species such as crossbills or Bohemian Waxwings are worthy of note at any time.

Audubon Field Notes contains frequent references to the effect that a certain arrival or departure date for a species constitutes a new record for the state in question. We in Iowa have assembled no dates for the state as a whole and it is possible that the dates submitted for this section could, in time, form the basis of comparison with future migration dates if the information seemed worthwhile.

As the success of **Iowa Bird Life** depends upon the contributions of its readers, it is hoped the membership will cooperate by sending in their unusual observations to Woodward Brown, 4815 Ingersoll Ave., Des Moines 12, Iowa. Any observations concerning extreme rarities, such as the Whimbrel record in this issue, are worthy of a separate note of length including all observational details. Such observations should be sent to Mr. Brown, who will forward material on extreme rarities to the editor.

DEADLINE FOR COPY—The first of the month prior to the month of publication. Deadline for the next issue is May 1st.

The editor would appreciate any comment on the cover design. Doubtless some will be pleased, some dismayed. The basic editorial policy remains virtually identical to the policy of Mr. Pierce. The editor appreciates copy sent in typed, double-spaced, and adhering to the fifth edition of the **A.O.U. Checklist**. The cover design was done by Gary Yarrington, Curator of Exhibits at the Davenport Public Museum. It is based on a photo by Fred Kent.

From 1881 Justice Docket of Minden Township, Iowa.

STATE OF IOWA VS. HENRY HOLTS

Information has been filed this day by Joseph Champlain before me against said H. Holts charging him with crime of misdemeanor. The said Defendant did on 10 July 1881 shoot and kill birds which are not birds of prey. That the said Defendant did shoot and kill near the house of Jacob Shebler martins which are protected by law. Defendant when brought into court pleaded not guilty and asked for continuance and by agreement of both parties trial set for Wednesday, July 18, 1881 A.M.

W. U. Cochran

Justice of the Peace — Page 130-131

On July 13, 1881, the defendant asked for and secured a jury trial verdict in favor of the defendant.

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The Iowa Ornithologists' Union was organized at Ames, Iowa, February 28, 1923, for the study and protection of native birds and to promote fraternal relations among Iowa bird students.

The central design of the Union's official seal is the Eastern Goldfinch, designated State Bird of Iowa in 1933.

Publications of the Union: Mimeographed letters, 1923-1928; "The Bulletin," 1929-1930; "Iowa Bird Life," beginning 1931.

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